Philosophy

The study of Philosophy offers students the chance to investigate life’s biggest questions: What is happiness? Is morality relative? What is justice, or freedom, or equality? What, and who, am I? Do I really have a race or a gender? Is my mind anything more than just the activity of my brain? Does God exist? And so on. But more than just asking these questions, philosophy examines the reasons for and against possible answers to them, and helps you develop the critical skills necessary to challenge those answers and build your own solutions.

The Department of Philosophy offers courses in all areas of philosophy. It is an active and growing department, with teaching and research strengths in the history of philosophy as well as in both analytic and continental approaches to contemporary philosophical issues. The philosophy major is also an excellent preparation for a number of other careers from law to medicine to business to seminary. Year after year, philosophy majors demonstrate superior achievement on all standardized graduate tests including the GRE, LSAT, and MCAT. And philosophy majors consistently outperform all other humanities majors in measurements of salary and earnings from early career all the way to later career. Philosophy is an especially good pre-law major, and our graduates are routinely admitted to their school of choice, including such top law schools as Harvard, Yale, the University of Virginia, and the University of Tennessee.

Valuable skills and their applications

Philosophy students develop many valuable career skills:

- **Analysis**: the ability to identify and specify the key issue in a complex problem
- **Argument**: the ability to develop a convincing case for or against a position
- **Research**: the ability to locate and isolate material relevant to a claim
- **Communication**: the ability to present complex positions clearly and concisely.

Opportunities:

- **The Philosophy Circle**, which is comprised entirely of undergraduate students, provides social and intellectual activities in regular meetings focusing on issues of current student interest. It also hosts public lectures by prominent philosophers.
- **The University of Memphis Undergraduate Philosophy Conference** is an annual conference held in conjunction with the Mid-South Philosophy Conference. This conference brings in students from all around the country.
- **The Spindel Conference** has been held annually since 1981, bringing internationally prominent philosophers to campus for three days of lectures and discussion.
- **Awards**: the department presents three awards every year to undergraduate students: the Carroll Bowman Scholarship, the Craig Garrett Scholarship, and the Outstanding Student Award.
PHILOSOPHY
SAMPLE FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Freshman Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 1010</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE MATH</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 1101 or 1102-GE Human./Fine Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA Foreign Language*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 1020</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 1611</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE MATH</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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<td>Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA Foreign Language*</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE Social/Behavioral Science</td>
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**Semester Totals** 15-16 hrs.  
15 hrs.

Sophomore Year

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 2201 or 2202</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE Social/Behavioral Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE History/Foreign Language*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE Nat. Science w/lab</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 3001</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE History/Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>UD PHIL Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHIL 3002</td>
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**Semester Totals** 16 hrs.  
16 hrs.

Junior Year

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<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 2381</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL 3411 or 3511</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>UD PHIL Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GE History/Elective</td>
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<td>UD PHIL Elective</td>
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**Semester Totals** 15 hrs.  
15 hrs.

Senior Year

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
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**Semester Totals** 15 hrs.  
13 hrs.

GE = General Education Requirements 
BA = Bachelor of Arts college requirements 
UD = Upper division

Foreign Language Requirement – See the Undergraduate Catalog: http://catalog.memphis.edu

Degree hours = 120  
42 Upper Division hours required for graduation

No more than 2 hours of physical education courses may be counted toward a degree.
Residence – 30 of the last 60 hours must be taken at University of Memphis; at least 60 hours must be at a four-year institution; transfer students must earn at least 6 hours of a major at UM and at least 3 hours of a minor at UM
PHILOSOPHY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PHIL 1101. Introduction to Philosophy. Critical exploration of such issues as knowledge, reality, consciousness and the good life.

PHIL 1102. Introduction to Ethics. Introduction to such social and ethical questions as, "What makes a happy life? What justifies ideas of good and evil? How should we live with others?

PHIL 1311. Critical Thinking. Introduction to the appraisal of arguments found in everyday and specialized sources.


PHIL 3001. History of Ancient Philosophy. From 7th century B.C. through early Middle Ages.

PHIL 3002. History of Modern Philosophy. From late Middle Ages through 19th century.

PHIL 3411. Contemporary Moral Problems. Such important contemporary moral issues as pornography and obscenity, capital punishment, abortion, human rights, "reverse discrimination," and civil disobedience.

PHIL 3451. Existentialism. Historical and comparative study of different existentialist writers and their relation to literature, religion, and psychology; readings from such writers as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus.

PHIL 3452. Feminist Theory. Selected ideas from the history on women from the Greeks to the present.

PHIL 3453. Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy. Introduction to key figures and movements in 19th and 20th century continental philosophy.


PHIL 3512. Science, Technology and Human Values. Ethical problems growing out of development of modern science and technology.

PHIL 3514. Biomedical Ethics. Discussion of ethical problems raised by contemporary medical practices and biological innovations from standpoint of contemporary ethical theories.

PHIL 3515. Environmental Ethics. Discussion of ethical problems raised by human interaction with the environment.

PHIL 3516. Philosophy of Law. Philosophical analyses of nature and justification of law, legal reasoning, legal institutions, practices such as punishment.

PHIL 3550. Issues in Political Philosophy. Introduction to canonical and contemporary issues and thinkers in political philosophy such as the role of the civil state, divine right, social contract theory, individualism, nationalism, fascism, and theocracy, as well as the nature and variety of justice.

PHIL 3571. Business Ethics and Society. Ethical issues that arise in interactions between business and society.

PHIL 3611. Critical Thinking. Evaluative examination of reasons that may be given for beliefs.

PHIL 3621. Intermediate Logic. Symbolic logic, including propositional calculus, lower functional calculus.

PHIL 3701. The Human and the Divine. Examination of one or more major religious movements with regard to their origins, doctrines, and philosophical significance.

PHIL 3702. Philosophy of Religion. Selected religious doctrines and practices from standpoint of philosophy.


PHIL 3741. African American Philosophy. Philosophical investigation of social and political themes which have developed historically in African American culture.

PHIL 3771. Philosophy In Literature. Expression of philosophical ideas in literature.

PHIL 3772. Critical Theory. Exploration of various social and political writings concerning the nature of human agency, intersubjectivity, communication, democratic procedure and practice

PHIL 3781. Philosophy and Film. Basic philosophical problems, integrating philosophical readings with films.

PHIL 3880. Problems In Philosophy. An intensive study of selected philosophical problems.

PHIL 4211. Studies In Ancient Philosophy. Readings from primary sources, supplemented by commentary from antiquity and modern scholarship, including Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, and Hellenistic period.

PHIL 4311. Studies in Modern Philosophy. Readings from major philosophers of 17th to early 19th centuries, supplemented by commentaries from modern and contemporary sources.

PHIL 4421. Philosophy of Mind. Major issues and positions in recent philosophy of mind.

PHIL 4422. Recent Anglo American Philosophy. Major developments in philosophy in England and United States from 1900 to present, reading from such philosophers as Russell, Moore, Ayer, Wittgenstein, James, Dewey, Lewis, Quine and other contemporary authors.

PHIL 4441. Recent Continental Philosophy. Major figures in 20th Century European thought; phenomenology, existentialism, structuralism, critical theory, and hermeneutics.

PHIL 4551. Social and Political Philosophy. Major philosophical theories of man and the state; emphasis on concepts of society, culture, institutions, government, law, power, authority, rights, and obligation.


PHIL 4661. Philosophy of Science. Basic features and presuppositions of science; nature of scientific method, theories, explanation, and verification; emphasis on the natural sciences.

PHIL 4671. Aesthetics. Introduction to philosophical theories and assumptions concerning nature and role of art and possibility of aesthetic evaluation.


PHIL 4994. Reading and Research. Individual directed study in area of special interest.

Please consult the Undergraduate Catalog at http://catalog.memphis.edu for complete descriptions.
PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Program objectives for a B.A. in Philosophy are: (a) to acquire fundamental knowledge reflecting the subdivisions within the discipline; (b) to express a high degree of satisfaction with the program and instruction within the department; (c) to be able to demonstrate skills which will be beneficial in further study or in chosen career paths.

A. University General Education Program (41 hours)
See the Undergraduate Catalog for the University General Education Program requirements.

B. College and Degree (B.A.) Requirements (6-9 hours)
The College and Bachelor of Arts requirements are in addition to the University General Education Program requirements and are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog.

C. The Major (30 hours)
Completion of 30 semester hours in philosophy courses including PHIL 1101 or 1102, 1611, 3001, 3002, 3411 or 3511 and 15 additional upper division semester hours.

To prepare philosophy students for success in a number of fields, the department offers courses in the following sub-divisions of philosophy.

- Philosophy of Law/Political Philosophy: PHIL 3411, 3511, 3512, 3515, 3516, 4551.
- Ethics/Social Philosophy: PHIL 3411, 3452, 3511, 3512, 3514, 3515, 3741, 4551.
- Philosophy of Religion/Religious Studies: PHIL 3411, 3451, 3511, 3701, 3702, 3721.
- Philosophy/Contemporary Culture: PHIL 3411, 3451, 3452, 3511, 3512, 3741, 3771, 3781, 4441, 4671.
- Philosophy of Science/Epistemology: PHIL 3460, 3512, 3515, 3621, 4421, 4422, 4632, 4661.

D. Electives
Electives may be chosen to bring the total number of hours to 120.

E. Honors Program
This program is open to philosophy majors with a 3.0 overall average and a 3.5 average in philosophy. The student will complete, with a minimum grade of "B", a thesis submitted for credit in PHIL 4891. The thesis topic must be approved by the thesis director before the student registers for PHIL 4891. Those students who complete the program and the regular college requirements will be recognized at the commencement ceremony by having their degree conferred “With Honors in Philosophy.” Moreover, the student’s diploma and record at the University of Memphis will reflect this distinction.

Philosophy Minor
Completion of 18 semester hours in philosophy courses, including PHIL 1101 or 1102, 1311 or 1611, and 12 upper division semester hours. In consultation with the coordinator of undergraduate studies in philosophy, a student may design a minor (18 hours) that applies to the student’s major area of study.

For more information, please contact:

The Department of Philosophy
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Clement Hall 327
901-678-2535

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Undergraduate Advisor: Amit Sen
amitsen@memphis.edu

The University of Memphis
http://www.memphis.edu

The College of Arts and Sciences
http://www.memphis.edu/cas

UM Career Services: http://www.memphis.edu/careerservices

The University of Memphis is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University. It is committed to education of a non-racially identifiable student body.